

The members of the California State Assembly urge you to take the time to address family safety and home preparedness for winter. Winter storms in California can be deadly, causing flooding, flash floods, high coastal surf, mudslides, snowstorms, and avalanches. Wherever you live or travel, you should be aware of the dangers of a winter storm and be prepared to cope with one.

Across the United States, floods and flash floods result in more damage and deaths than any other weather related hazard. In the first three months of 1995, California experienced over 2 billion dollars of damage and 33 fatalities from flooding. A majority of the serious floods in California occur during the winter and spring seasons, though torrential downpours associated with desert and mountain thunderstorms occasionally produce flash floods during the summer months.

Keeping abreast of current conditions, forecasts, watches, warnings and statements from the National Weather Service or your local TV and radio stations are basic keys to winter weather preparedness. The tips included in this brochure could be vital for your safety.

Sincerely,



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Compliments of your Assemblyman

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# Disaster Preparedness Guide

## Your Preventive Checklist

## Before the Storm

Store the following supplies at work, home, and car in handy locations:

1. Keep a first aid kit including essential medicines.
2. Food (packaged, dried, canned, no cook baby food and special diet food).
3. Non-electric can opener.
4. Portable radio, flashlights, and spare batteries (stored in water-tight plastic bag).
5. Store drinking water in plastic containers.
  - Keep car fueled: if electric power is cut off, filling stations may not be able to operate.
  - Know safe routes from your home or office to high, safe ground.
  - Keep sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting lumber and other emergency building materials handy for waterproofing.

## Receiving a Storm Warning

- If flooding is likely, move valuable household possessions to the upper floors of your home.
- Establish an out-of-state family contact.
- Before leaving, disconnect all electrical appliances or turn off all electric circuits at the fuse panel by pulling the main switch.

## During the Storm

- Do not try to drive a flooded road.
- When you are walking, do not cross if flowing water is above your knees.
- Use a telephone only in cases of emergency.
- Tune battery powered radio to local radio station for emergency information.

## After the Storm

- Follow local instructions on safety of drinking water.
- Avoid disaster areas.
- Avoid downed power lines and broken gas lines.
- Use flashlights – not lanterns, matches or candles.
- Take pictures of damage for insurance claims.

## Mudslides

A destructive and not that uncommon result of winter storms in California is the mudslide and debris flow. Areas within California that are particularly at risk include the hills in the San Francisco Bay Region and much of the higher terrain around the Los Angeles Basin. Rainfall rates are the single most important factor in determining the chances of mud and debris flow occurrence.

Southern California and some parts of Northern California are especially vulnerable to mud and debris flows because of the steep terrain and chaparral vegetation growing on the slopes. Mud and debris flows are a deadly phenomenon. The saturated soil and debris moves down a hill or mountain slope at various speeds, as much as 40 miles per hour, crushing or sweeping aside homes and their contents, washing out roads and bridges, sweeping away cars and leaving behind thick deposits of saturated mud, rocks, and other debris. Take yourself out of harm's way when these conditions occur.

## Fog

Californians need also be aware of the possibility of dangerous road conditions associated with fog. Dense fog is most common during the late fall and winter seasons in California's Central Valley. Along the coast, dense fog can occur during any season but is most common during the summer and fall months. Fog can lead to tragic results on California's highways. When driving in fog, it is important to follow the following safety rules:

- Drive with your lights on low beam.
- Reduce your speed and increase your following distance from the car ahead of you.
- Avoid crossing traffic unless absolutely necessary.
- Listen for traffic you cannot see.
- Use wipers and defroster as necessary for maximum vision.
- Be patient, don't pass lines of traffic.
- Unless absolutely necessary, don't stop on any freeway or other heavily traveled road.
- If your vehicle stalls or becomes disabled, move away from it to avoid personal injury.

The safest way to complete your travel may be to delay it. Try to schedule your travel at times when fog is at a minimum — normally during the afternoon.

Don't become a statistic—it is better to reach your destination late than not at all.